



Western Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

STUDENT RECITAL

April 19th, 2025

6pm, VKH

Janaki Butterworth, *Mezzo-Soprano*

Paul Digout, *Piano*

Meinacht
Beiaard

Alphons Diepenbrock
(1862-1921)

Dix Mélodies

La Chanson des Marins halés

Le Regard Eternel

La Chanson fatale

Complainte du Petit Cheval blanc

Le diable dans la Nuit

Rondel

Chanson

L'anneau

Le Naufrage

Les Médisants

Henriëtte Bosmans
(1895-1952)

-Intermission-

What Lips My Lips Have Kissed

Jake Heggie
(b. 1961)

Sarah Megan Cupit, cello

6 Lieder, op. 17

Zwischen dir und mir

Van het Sterrekijn

Cupidootje

Elisabeth Kuyper
(1877-1953)

Surabaya-Johnny
Speak Low

Kurt Weill
(1900-1950)

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Music (Performance) degree.*

Shades of Love

Just over a year ago, I decided to pursue research into the Art Songs of Dutch composers while applying for a research scholarship. What began as a plea for funding evolved into a genuine passion. This recital does not exclusively feature those Dutch composers, but also a handful of additional songs that will help take us on a journey through the many iterations of love experienced across a lifetime. This recital is a showcase of love in all its shades: the love I have for music – particularly unknown music that deserves to be shared – the love I've felt throughout my years at Western, and the many shades of love that color our world.

We open with two very different songs by Alphons Diepenbrock. Despite his eventual success as a composer, Diepenbrock largely supported himself as a teacher of classics, as a private tutor of Latin and Greek, and as a writer. His keen literary mind enabled him to compose songs with a sharp sensitivity to the text, be they about leaving past loves and longings behind with the dawning of spring, as in 'Meinacht' (1885), or the tolling of bells to announce Belgian victory during WWI, as in 'Beiaard' (1916). Diepenbrock was an avid supporter of the allies during WWI. When the Germans took control of Belgium, they stoked the divide between the Flemish and the Walloons. In 'Beiaard', the text rallies the Flemish and Walloons to defeat their enemies together, unified as a strong front against Germany and the axis powers.

Composer and pianist Henriëtte Bosmans was also no stranger to the impact of war. Considered a 'Jewish Case' during WWII, thanks to her Jewish mother, performance of her music was banned in 1942, and she herself was blacklisted as a performer. She did not compose at all during the war, focusing her energy instead on protecting her elderly Jewish mother from persecution. After the war, Bosmans concentrated almost solely on vocal compositions, largely inspired by the duo she formed with the French mezzo-soprano Noémie Perugia, with whom she was likely romantically involved, and to whom she dedicated her *Dix mélodie* (1949-51). Bosmans's bisexuality is reflected throughout the set. 'Le regard eternal', 'Rondel', and 'Chanson', explore the desire of one woman for another, be that through the pleasure of a dream in which you lie with your dearest friend in her tomb, or feeling physically monstrous as you observe two lovers on a walk, though your desire is pure, or the passionate love for a woman who you must push away because 'she was sweet as death'. Many of the pieces also appear to be allegories for war; one need only replace 'sailor' with 'soldier'. 'La chanson des marins halés' describes how sailors are changed by their time at sea; even if they do return, a part of them remains lost. 'La chanson fatale' describes a sailor who loves the sea more than their lover. The brave little white horse who meets a violent end in 'Complainte du petit cheval blanc' can be viewed as an allegory for young, optimistic men killed too soon in war, with no chance of ever seeing the world in spring. The sea is a prominent figure throughout this set. In 'Naufrage' it represents tumultuous, passionate desire, and in 'L'anneau', it serves as the source of an old, mysterious ring turned green by the sea, weathered but noble to suit the finder's destiny. 'Le diable dans la nuit' and 'Les Médisants' are outliers, with no mention of the sea, of ambivalent queer desire, or of war. They are two delightful pieces, one about the devil's macabre antics, the other about gossip spreading through a village, that provide moments of reprieve within the brooding sea of Bosmans's imagination. As one of the last things Bosmans wrote before her passing in 1952, this set feels uniquely reflective of who she was, a culmination of her experience as queer woman, a Jewish woman in a turbulent time, and all the love and loss she experienced along the way.

'What Lips My Lips Have Kissed' is another reflection on life, through the words of American poet, playwright, and feminist, Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950). Jake Heggie uses voice, cello, and piano to guide the listener through a journey of reflection on loves that have come and gone. As much as this poetry reflects on love, it also reflects on aging, on the inevitability of time, and on remembrance. And while this reflection can lead to anguish, it can also lead to peace. While those remembered lads now lie as ghosts, beauty remains in the fact that they were known at all – beauty in that fact that summer once sang within you, even if just for a little while – and in that beauty, peace.

Composer and conductor Elisabeth Kuyper was a woman of many firsts. Born in Amsterdam, she became the first woman to gain acceptance into the *Berlin Meisterschule für Komposition*, where she studied with Max Bruch, and later the first woman to teach theory and composition at that very institution. She was also the first

woman composer to be awarded the Mendelssohn Prize in 1905. Her *Sechs Lieder* (1922) reveal her ear for melody and rich, colorful harmonies. The three pieces selected from the set all explore different and distinct iterations of love. In ‘Zwischen dir und mir’, the singer laments the distance that separates them from their beloved. ‘Van het Sterrekijn’ is a sweet, simple lullaby. Transitioning smoothly into the cabaret world, in ‘Cupidootje’ or ‘Cunning Cupid’, the singer urges Cupid’s arrow to strike their heart – now! – and set them on a path toward love.

And thus, we arrive at the cabaret, closing with two pieces by the legendary Kurt Weill. ‘Surabaya-Johnny’ from *Happy End* (1929) serves the best of Bertolt Brecht. In Weill’s musical, the character Lillian sings the song to her beloved gangster Bill, upset at his return to a life of crime. The actual story within the text – of a young woman swindled by the criminal seafarer Surabaya-Johnny – is entirely unrelated to the plot of the show, merely providing an opportunity for the righteous Lillian to rage at the mistreatment she’s endured at the hands of a lying, cheating man – she hates him so, but she loves him so. This is love at its messiest, its most dangerous... and its wordiest. Then the curtain descends with ‘Speak Low’ (1943), describing the fleeting moments we are allowed with those we love. In time, everything ends, and often too soon, but love is always there, to be enjoyed in brief, blissful moments, and remembered across a lifetime.